(20)

THE *Poor Mechanick's* PLEA,

Against the

Rich Clergy's OPPRESSION;

SHEWING

Tithes are no *Gospel-Ministers* Maintenance.

IN

A *Brief* and *Plain* Method, how that **Tithes** (as now paid) are both inconsistent with the Dispensation of the *Law*, and the Dispensation of the *Gospel*.

Also, how they were brought into the Church many Hundred Years after Christ, and Testified against by several Ancient Christians and Martyrs.

With several Sober *Reasons* against the *Payment* of them.

By *J. B.*

Jobs. 9. By reason of the multitude of Oppressions, they make the Oppressed to cry: They cry out by reason of the Arm of the Mighty.

London, Printed and Sold by *T. Sowle*, in *White-Hart-Court* in *Gracious-Street*, 1700

THE
Preface to the Reader;
OR, THE
Author's Apology for this Book.

ALthough ſeveral Books have been Publiſhed heretofore, treating of the ſame Subject as this ſmall Treatiſe doth, but far exceeding the limits thereof; yet I am not without hope, but this alſo may prove a means or help for the Satisfaction of ſome, that may probably be in Doubt, whether **Tithes**, *as now paid, are warrantable by Scripture for the Maintaining of a Goſpel-Miniſtry: Which Doubt (I think) the Impartial will find removed, or anſwered, as they ſeriouſly peruſe the ſame; although the Stile therein may ſeem to ſome to be in a mean and plain manner: But let ſuch know, I am no learned* Academick, *but a poor* Mechanick, *and have endeavoured to be intelligible unto all. And if it be liable to*

the Cenſure of ſome of thoſe that may think themſelves immediately concerned, when they ſee their Craft *to be in Danger, let ſuch make it appear, that it is contrary to the naked Truth, and far be it from me to Juſtifie or Maintain the ſame: But if it appear to be the Truth (as I hope nothing will be found to the contrary) then I deſire it may prevail and proſper over all Falſhood and Error.*

Yet I would have none think, that I do believe the whole Body of the Clergy *of* England *to be equally guilty of* Oppreſſion, *&c. I ſay, Nay; but that there are ſeveral ſober and moderate Men among them, conſidering their Station; which I deſire that the Lord, in his due time, may make able* Miniſters *indeed, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit; and then they will follow the Example of the* Apoſtles, *and Miniſter freely.*

J. Bockett.

THE

THE Poor Mechanicks PLEA, &c.

THE Conſideration of the great Oppreſſion and heavy Burden of **Tithes** that is impoſed upon the *Inhabitants* of this Land, and lieth weightily upon the *Laborious Husband-Men* and *Farmers*, that beſtow great Labour and Pains, and alſo are at great Charges, in Manuring and Ordering their *Land*, Sowing of their *Seed*, Maintaining of *Servants*, keeping of *Cattle*, great *Rents* and *Taxes*, &c. and many Caſualties and Hazards they are liable unto; then patiently waiting the appointed Seaſon, and expecting (through the Lord's Bleſſing) to Reap the Fruit of their *Labours*; but perhaps a quarter (if not more) of their Profit is raked away by the **Tithe-mongers** Servants: But *Chiefly* this unreaſonable Payment of **Tithes** is moſt heavy and burden-

ſome upon thoſe that for *Conſcience*-ſake cannot uphold or maintain that *Miniſtry* which takes them, which they believe is not of God. And this is one of the moſt *Principal* Pillars by which the *National Miniſtry* is upheld, to wit, **Tithes**.

Therefore, conſidering this, it is in my Mind to write concerning the ſame, under theſe Three Heads or *Chapters*.

Firſt, Of the Manner and Nature thereof, and End for which they were given under the *Law*, and their Aboliſhment.

Secondly, Of the Maintenance of *Chriſt's Miniſters* under the *Goſpel-Diſpenſation* in the Primitive Times.

And *Thirdly*, Of the Eſtabliſhment of *Tithes*, after the *Apoſtacy* entered, contrary both to *Law* and *Goſpel*; with the Teſtimony of *Ancient Chriſtians* againſt the ſame.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Of the Manner of Tithes, *and the End for which they were given under the* Law, *and their Abolishment.*

TITHES were commanded by the *Lord* under the *Law*, or *First Covenant*, to be paid by *Israel* in the Land of *Canaan*, unto the Tribe of *Levi*; and that any other People or Nation had the like command to pay them, is not so much as mentioned in *Scripture*; and this only was in and under the *First Covenant*: For this Tribe the Lord chose, and set apart for his *Work* and *Service* of the *Tabernacle* and *Office* of the *Priesthood*; for the Lord said, *I have given the Children of* Levi *all the Tenth in* Israel, *for an Inheritance for their Service which they serve, even the Service of the Tabernacle of the Congregation*, Numb. 18. 21. And they had no other Inheritance among their Brethren, *for the Lord was their Inheritance*, Deut. 10. 9. And of the Tithe *of the Land, whether the Seed of the Land, or Fruit of the Tree, it was Holy unto the Lord*, Levit. 27. 30. And when they had received of their Brethren, the Children of *Israel*, as from the Lord, their *Tithe*, or *Tenth*, they were commanded to *Offer an Heave-Offering of*

it to the Lord alſo, even a Tenth part of the Tithe, Num. 18. 26. And this was the Portion of *Aaron* the *Prieſt*, for himſelf and his Sons, even the *Tenth* of the *Tenth*, or an *Hundreth* Part, *Num.* 18. 19.

So by this it is evident, that the Cauſe or Reaſon, why the Tribe of *Levi* received *Tithes*, was, *1ſt*, Becauſe they had no Part, Portion or Lot in the Land, as the other Tribes had. *2dly*, Becauſe it was their daily Work to ſerve at the *Tabernacle*, and to be *aſſiſtant* to the *Prieſts*, in Killing and Offering Beaſts, *&c.* for Sacrifice; with many other things, too numerous to be here inſerted, but may partly be ſeen in *Numb.* 3, 4, & 8 Chapters.

Moreover, This one Tribe may be thought to be (if not a full Tenth, yet) near a Tenth part of the People; but they were not to enjoy or poſſeſs the full *Tithe*, or *Tenth*, themſelves; for the *Widow*, and the *Fatherleſs*, and the *Stranger*, that were within their Gates, were to come and *eat* and be *ſatisfied*, Deut. 14 29. For there was not to be a *Beggar* in *Iſrael*; yet the Poor were not to ceaſe out of the Land, *Deut.* 15. 11.

Now to compare the Manner and Practice of the *National Miniſters*, or **Tithe-mongers** of theſe Days, with the Manner and Practice of the *Levites* and *Prieſts* under the *Firſt Covenant*, as Eſtabliſhed by the *Lord*; I think there are but few ſo blind, but they may ſee a great *Difference* and *Contrariety*. For

For obſerve, 1. Here was one whole *Tribe* that took **Tithe**, as the Lord commanded, which may be, as I ſaid, near a *Tenth* Part of the People in the Land. But, I believe, the *National Prieſts* are not the *Hundredth* Part of the People in *England*, including their *Wives* and *Children*. Then note, How unreaſonable it is in them, that call themſelves *Goſpel-Miniſters*, to exact and take Ten Times as much by the *Law* of Man (conſidering their Number proportionably) as the *Levites* had given them by the *Law* of *God*, and yet perform not that Service for which they were given.

2. There was no other Tribe to receive *Tithes*, but only the Tribe of *Levi*: But if theſe *Prieſts* were put to prove themſelves of the Linage of *Levi*, and of *Aaron*'s ſtock, it would puzzle the ſtrongeſt Brains amongſt them, and be a harder thing for them to do, than by all their Wiſdom and Peruſal of *Ancient Authors* they could perform. So then, ſeeing they cannot prove themſelves of that *Race* or *Tribe*, let them ſhew a *Command*, if they *can*, that any other *Tribe* had, to take *Tithe*, throughout the whole *Bible*.

3. The *Levites* had no Inheritance among their Brethren in the Land of *Canaan*. But many of the *National Prieſts* have beſides their *Tithes*, *Glebe-Lands*, and ſome conſiderable *Eſtates* in Land, and other ways of *Gain* and *Profit*, ſufficient for a Competent Livelihood,

4.

4. The *Levites* or *Prieſts* were to offer *Sacrifice* for themſelves, and the Sins of their Brethren almoſt continually. But the *Prieſts* of *England* for their *Tithes*, perhaps may Study a few Hours in a Week to make up a Matter of their own Brain, and not from the Lord, and deliver it unto the People for a *Divine Matter*. For it would not agree with the manner of their *Education*, Perſonally, to take upon them the Occupation of a *Butcher*, to kill *Bullocks*, *Rams*, *Lambs*, &c. for Sacrifice; neither to be ſo Laborious, as the *Levites* and *Prieſts* were under the Law. So then they come ſhort of the *Prieſts* due, which was *the Shoulder*, *the two Cheeks*, *and the Maw*, Deut. 18. 3. but their Stomachs are uſed to more dainty Fare, for the moſt part.

5. The *Tythes* in the *firſt Covenant* did relieve the *Widows*, the *Fatherleſs*, and the *Stranger*, that there was no beggar to be in *Iſrael*; but theſe *National Tithe-mongers* claim all for themſelves, ſo greedy they are of *Gain*, that ſome of them attain to ſuch a degree of Heighth, that they have ſeveral Hundred Pounds *per Annum*; yea, ſome ſeveral Thouſands, ſo deſirous they are to enlarge and augment their *Benefices*; and if ſuch out of their *large Revenues* do voluntarily contribute to the relief of the *Poor*, then perhaps he is called a good charitable Man, altho' the *Poor* have as much right to *Tithes* as himſelf, according to the

Law

Law of *God*, aforeſaid, *Deut.* 14. 29. And if thoſe **Tithes** were now ſo divided, that the *Poor* of the Nation might have their part to relieve their *Neceſſities*, there would not be that multitude of *poor diſtreſſed miſerable People* about the Nation as there are; neither need laborious Tradeſmen, and mean Houſekeepers, be *Burdened* with ſuch large Pariſh-Rates and Aſſeſſments towards their Relief, as is very evident they are in ſeveral places.

Now if it were poſſible (as it is not) that the *National Miniſters* could make full proof that all things relating to the *firſt Covenant* they did preciſely practice and obſerve, yet it would not avail them, or vindicate ſuch a practice under the *ſecond Covenant*, or *Goſpel-Diſpenſation*; for the Lord ſaid by the Mouth of *Jeremy*, *That the days come that I will make a New* Covenant *with the Houſe of* Iſrael, *and with the Houſe of* Judah: *Not according to the* Covenant *that I made with their Fathers in the Day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the Land of* Egypt, *Jer.* 31. 31, 32.

Now this *New Covenant*, I believe there are none, or but few, but that do own it to be the *Goſpel-Diſpenſation*, which was fulfilled when Chriſt came and Suffered; for the Author to the *Hebrews* alludes to the ſame place of Scripture, *Heb.* 8. 8, 9. and alſo ſpeaks, that if the *firſt Covenant* had been faultleſs, then

then ſhould no place have been found for the *ſecond*, for that could not make him that did the Service perfect, as appertaining to the *Conſcience*, Heb. 9. 9, 10. which ſtood only in *Outward* and *Carnal* things; therefore the Lord ſaid, *I* Will *make a New One*: And Chriſt the Everlaſting *High Prieſt*, Heb. 7. 27, 28. came to do his *Father's* Will, and *offered* himſelf up *once* for *all*; *ſo he taketh away the firſt, that he may Eſtabliſh the ſecond*, Heb. 10. 9. and changed the *Levitical Prieſthood*; *and the Prieſthood being changed, there is made of neceſſity a change alſo of the Law* that was Outward, *Heb.* 7. 12. *for Chriſt was the End* thereof, *Rom.* 10. 4. in which, *Tithes* were included, being a *Jewiſh Rite*, belonging to that *Prieſthood*.

Now I cannot perceive that any can reaſonably ſuppoſe, that the *Tithes* (or *Wages* as I may ſay) being *Jewiſh*, that was *due* to the *Levites* for the Work and Service of the *Law* or *firſt Covenant*, ſhould remain in force as *due* to thoſe that never were imployed in that Service, and alſo not of *Iſrael's* ſtock, eſpecially when all that was *aboliſhed* for which they were given.

But the *ſecond Covenant* which was not according to the *firſt (viz.)* Outward, was, That the Lord would put his Law in their inward parts, and *write it in their Hearts*, and there ſhould be a more *Univerſal Knowledge* of the Lord,

Lord, *Heb.* 8. 10, 11. for his Spirit in this *Goſpel-Diſpenſation* of the *New Covenant*, is poured fourth upon *Sons* and *Daughters*, Acts 2. 17. as was propheſied by *Joel*, chap. 2. 28. ſo that the *Chriſtians* can ſay (as they witneſs the fulfilling of this Promiſe) *that which may be known of God is manifeſt in them; for God hath ſhewed it unto them*, Rom. 1. 19. *For they being delivered from the Law (that being dead in which they were held) that they ſhould ſerve the Lord in newneſs of Spirit, and not in the oldneſs of the Letter*, Rom. 7. 6.

So it plainly appears that the *firſt Covenant*, or *Diſpenſation* of the *Law* that was *Outward*, and chiefly relating to the *Jews*, was aboliſhed by Chriſt; and the *ſecond Covenant*, or *Goſpel Diſpenſation*, came to take place; which is *Inward* and *Univerſal*, to as many as believe, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, Rom. 10. 12.

CHAP. II.

Of *the Eſtabliſhment and Maintenance of* Chriſt's Miniſters *under the* Second Covenant, *or* Goſpel-Diſpenſation.

WHen Chriſt ſent forth his Diſciples to Preach unto the People, he ſaid, *The Harveſt truly is great, but the* Labourers *are few: Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harveſt, that*

He

he [mark, it is God's work] *would ſend forth* Labourers *into the Harveſt. Go your ways* (ſaid he) *behold I ſend you forth as Lambs among Wolves*, Luke 10. 2, 3. but then their *Commiſſion* was only to the *Jews*, and into ſuch *Cities* as he himſelf ſhould come, for he ſaid, *Go not into the way of the Gentiles, but rather to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of Iſrael: Freely ye have received, freely give*, Mat. 10. 5, 6, 8. by which we may obſerve, altho' the *Jews* at that time did pay *Tithes*, and it was lawful for them ſo to do, *Luke* 11. 42. for Chriſt had not yet ſuffered, yet his *Miniſters* had no ſuch *Command* from him to receive them; but his *Command* was, that they ſhould *Eat* and *Drink* ſuch things as were ſet before them, by thoſe that *received* them and their *Doctrine* only, for the *Labourer* is worthy of his *Meat*, or *Hire*, Luke 10. 7, 8. So his Followers then (as well as now) were contented with his Allowance, for they returned rejoycing, and could ſay, They lacked nothing; for without doubt, ſuch whoſe Hearts were *open* to receive them and their Doctrine, were *alſo open* to communicate to their *Neceſſities*.

But when Chriſt had *ſuffered*, and roſe again, *finiſhing what he came to do*, John 19. 30. then he bid his *Miniſters* go and *Teach All Nations* (now, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*) what to do? To obſerve all *things whatſoever I have commanded you* (ſaith he) *and lo I am with you alway*,

alway, even unto the End of the World, Matth. 28. 19, 20. Now if all things that Chriſt commanded were to be *taught* to *all Nations* to obſerve, how can any ſuppoſe this one *particular thing* concerning his *Miniſters Maintenance* ſhould be excluded from the reſt of things *commanded* by him. But now I will ſhew how far his *Miniſters* taught and obſerved his *Command* in this one point.

Paul, that Eminent Miniſter and Apoſtle, writing to the Church at *Corinth*, in his firſt *Epiſtle*, Chap. 9. ſaith, *The Seal of mine Apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord*, verſe 2. ſhewing that he had begotten them into a *lively Faith* in *Chriſt*, therefore ſpeaks as unto his *Children*. 2 Cor. 12. 14. and queries with them, ſaying, *Have we* (meaning his Fellow-Labourers) *not Power to Eat and to Drink?* Verſ. 4. *Have we not Power to forbear Working?* Verſ. 6. and, *Who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not of the Fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a Flock, and eateth not of the Milk of the Flock?* Verſ. 7. Then ſpeaking concerning the *Law*, ſaith, *Thou ſhalt not muzzle the Mouth of the Ox that treadeth out the Corn*, verſ. 9. *being written for our ſakes* (ſaith he) *for the Labourer is worthy of his Reward*, 1 Tim. 5. 18. *And if we have ſown unto you ſpiritual things, Is it a great thing if we ſhall reap your carnal things?* 1 Cor. 9. 11. *And they which wait at the Altar, are partakers with the Altar; even ſo hath the Lord ordained, that they*

they which Preach the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Goſpel, verſ. 13. 14. alſo, *Let him that is taught in the Word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things*, Gal. 6. 6.

Now theſe are ſome of the Chiefeſt places in Scripture, that ſhews how far the *Goſpel-Miniſters* have Power to *partake* or *receive carnal things* of thoſe that they imparted *ſpiritual things unto*, and none other; wherein is not ſo much as a word of *Tithes* or *Tenths* named, nor yet any particular Allowance, *And having Food and Rayment* (ſaith he) *let us be therewith content*, 1 Tim. 6. 8. So by theſe Teſtimonies, it doth appear plainly, that there is an Agreement and Concurrence between Chriſt and his Miniſters concerning this thing.

Now how the *National Prieſts* can plead for *Tithes* or *Tenths*, as due to *Goſpel-Miniſters*, from Scripture, for my part I cannot underſtand; for there is not any *Command*, or any *Example*, therein to be found, as I can perceive; and when ſome have been put to prove it by Scripture, it hath been too hard a task for them: But to claim it as their right, they preſently flee to the *Law* of the *Nation*; and ſay, that *That* will give it them.

But now I will alſo ſhew how the *Goſpel-Miniſters* obſerved what they taught; *Paul* (as before) ſhews how far their Power extended; *But* (ſaith he) *neverthelefs, we have not uſed that Power, nor none of theſe things, but ſuffer all things*

things left we ſhould hinder the Goſpel of Chriſt, 1 Cor. 9. 12. *Neither have I written theſe things that it ſhould be ſo done unto me; for tho' I preach the Goſpel, I have nothing to glory of, for neceſſity is laid upon me; yea, wo is unto me if I Preach not the Goſpel*, verſ. 15, 16. *For if I do this thing willingly, I have a Reward: But if againſt my will, a Diſpenſation of the Goſpel is committed unto me: What is my Reward then? Verily; that when I Preach the Goſpel, I may make the Goſpel of Chriſt without Charge, that I abuſe not my Power in the Goſpel*, verſ. 17, 18. So here is a *good Example* for a *Goſpel-Miniſter*, although he had Power to partake of their *carnal* things, being the Fruit of his *Miniſtry*, yet he rather choſe to *work* with his *hands* to help to ſupply his *Neceſſities*, than make uſe of his *Power* to them and ſome others, *Acts* 18. 3. & 20. 34. 1 *Cor.* 4. 12. 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 9. 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 8. leſt he ſhould be chargeable or burdenſome, ſo as to abuſe his *Power*; *for* (ſaith he) *I will not be burdenſome to you, for I ſeek not yours; but you, and I will very gladly ſpend, and be ſpent for you*, 2 Cor. 12. 15. But ſometimes he did make uſe of his *Power* of receiving *carnal* things in ſome other *Churches*, to ſupply his *Neceſſities*; as appears in 2 *Cor.* 11. 7, 8, 9. and *Phil.* 4. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. alſo he left a *Charge* to thoſe that were *Rich* in this *World*, to be *Rich* alſo in *good Works*, *ready to Diſtribute to the Saints neceſſities*, Rom. 12. 13. *and willing to communicate*, 1 Tim. 6. 18. *For*

with such Sacrifice God is well pleased, Heb. 13. 16. So by what hath been already said, it is evident that *Christ's Ministers* may lawfully *work* or *labour* with their Hands; and also have *Power* to forbear *working*, where they see it convenient; also, that they have *Power* to receive *Temporals* (if they lack) of those *only* that receive their *Ministry*; and farther, they *freely gave* as they had *freely received*; for a *necessity* was laid upon them to Preach the *Gospel*, whether they partook of *carnal* things or not.

But now if it were possible that the *National Ministers* could prove *Tithes* due by Scripture, unto true *Pastors*, *Teachers* or *Ministers*, it would little avail them, except they could *prove* themselves such, by comparing their Lives and Practices with those that were truly so indeed, according to Scripture-Testimony, which I believe they cannot do, but rather will be found by this way of trial by Scripture (and I hope they will grant it is equal) to be in the steps of the false *Prophets*, *Ministers*, &c.

And to make this appear more plain, I will here Collect some Testimonies concerning each of them apart out of Scripture.

I. Of

I. Of True *Prophets*, *Paſtors*, *Miniſters*, *Teachers*, &c. Their Marks.

Samuel called all *Iſrael* to witneſs, and ſaid, *Whoſe Ox have I taken? Or whoſe Aſs have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppreſſed? Or of whoſe hand have I received any Bribe to blind mine Eyes therewith? And I will reſtore it you. And they ſaid, Thou haſt not defrauded us, nor oppreſſed us, neither haſt thou taken ought of any Mans hand:* And the Lord was *Witneſs* unto the Truth thereof, 1 *Sam.* 12. 3, 4, 5. And *David*, a *King* and *Prophet*, ſaid, *He was upright before the Lord, and had kept himſelf from his Iniquity, and the Lord recompenſed him according to the cleanneſs of his hands*, Pſal. 18. 23, 24. And further ſaid, *Thy Word have I hid in my Heart, that I might not Sin againſt thee:* For *it is as a Lamp unto my Feet, and a Light unto my Path. For he had done the Commandments of the Lord, and loved and kept his Teſtimonies*, Pſalm. 119. 11, 105, 166, 167. And the Lord ſaid unto *Jeremiah*, *Behold I have put my Words in thy Mouth*, Jer. 1. 9. And when he ſaw the *Word* of the *Lord* become a Reproach, he thought to ſpeak no more in his Name: *But his Word was in mine Heart* (ſaith he) *as a burning Fire ſhut up in my Bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and could not ſtay*, Jer.

20. 9. And these Prophets of the Lord, *spake by his Spirit in them*, Neh. 9. 30. by which he *revealed his Secrets unto them*, Amos 3. 7. 1 Cor. 2. 10. And such *declared his Word faithfully, what the Lord put in their Mouths*, 1 Kings 22. 14. And *Micah* said, *Truly I am full of Power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of Judgment, and of Might, to declare unto* Jacob *his Transgression, and unto* Israel *his Sin*, Mic. 3. 8.

Christ commanded his Disciples to Teach the Nations to observe his Commands (as aforesaid;) but *first* they were to tarry until they were *endued with Power from on High*, Luke 24. 49. which after they had received, *Acts* 1. 8. & 2. 4 they went forth to *Preach freely*, and it was their *Care* to make the *Gospel free, and without Charge*, as *Paul* said, *I have coveted no Man's Silver, or Gold, or Apparel, but his hands ministred to his Necessities*, Acts 20. 33, 34. And it was also the Practice of others, as appears, 1 *Cor.* 4. 12. 1 *Thess.* 2. 9. & 2 *Thess.* 3. 8. And their *Gifts* were *Spiritual*, whether *Prophesie*, *Ministry*, *Teaching*, or *Exhortation*, 1 Cor. 14. 1. Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8. *For as every one had received the Gift, so they were to minister, as good Stewards*, 1 Pet. 4. 10. And *Paul* was made a *Minister, not of Man, nor by Man*, Gal. 1. 1. *but according to the Gift of the Grace of God*, Eph. 3, 7. And their work was to *Turn People from Darkness to Light, from the Power of Satan unto the Power of God*, Acts 26. 18. Not that they

they were *Sufficient of themſelves to do any thing*, but their *Sufficiency was of God, who made them able Miniſters of the New Teſtament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit; for the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life*, 2 Cor. 3. 5, 6. Now they *received the Spirit of God, by which* they knew *the things of God, which things they ſpake, not in the Words which Man's Wiſdom teacheth, but what the Holy Ghoſt teacheth*, 1 Cor. 2. 12, 13. And then they could ſay, to thoſe that believed, *Ye are Witneſs, and God alſo, how Holily, and Juſtly, and Unblameably, we behaved our ſelves among you*, 1 Theſſ. 2. 10.

II. Of Falſe *Prophets, Paſtors, Miniſters, Teachers*, &c. Their *Marks*.

Balaam was a *Prophet*, but his way was Perverſe before the Lord, *Numb.* 22. 33. And *Peter* ſpeaks of ſome that followed this *Balaam, who loved the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs, but chiefly them which walk after the Fleſh, and count it pleaſure to Riot in the day time, having Eyes full of Adultery, and that cannot ceaſe from Sin* [mark] *beguiling unſtable Souls; an Heart they have exerciſed with Covetous Practices*, 2 Pet. 2. 10, 13, 14, 15. which is *abhorred by the Lord*, Pſalm. 10. 3. it being *Idolatry*, Col. 3. 5. And the *Covetous Idolaters*, Eph. 5. 5. They

are thoſe that the Prophet *Iſaiah* compares to *greedy Dogs, that can never have enough; looking every one for his Gain from his quarter*, Iſa. 56. 11. And *ſuch that teach for Hire, and divine for Money; and he that putteth not into their Mouths, they even prepare War againſt him*, Mic. 3. 5, 11. *And they covet Fields* (or the Fruits thereof) *and take them by violence, having the Power* (or Law) *in their hand*, like old *Eli*'s Sons, *that took Men's Goods by force. So they oppreſs a Man and his Houſe, or Heritage*, Mic. 2. 1, 2. 1 Sam. 2. 16. *And by their means they bear rule; which is a horrible thing committed in the Land, but a People loved to have it ſo*, Jer. 5. 30. 31. *And ſay, ſpeak unto us ſmooth things*, Iſa. 30. 10. So theſe Prophets ſay, *Peace, Peace, and there was no Peace*, Jer. 6. 14. And ſay, *The Lord hath ſaid, when he never ſpake by them, nor ſent them; yet they run, and Propheſie lies in his Name, of the deceit of their own Heart*, Jer. 14. 14. & 23. 21, 25, 26, 30, 31. Which is likened to *daubing with untempered Morter*, or *ſewing Pillows under Peoples Armholes*, Ezek. 13. 7, 10, 11. Theſe Prophets Conſpire together, *like a roaring* Lion, *ravening the Prey; they have devoured Souls, they have taken the Treaſure and precious things, they have made many Widows*, Ezek. 22. 25. *They ſcatter the Sheep, and feed themſelves with the Fat, and cloth themſelves with the Wool; but feed not the Flock, nor ſeek that which was loſt or driven away, but with force and cruelty*

have

have ruled: The true Prophets cried *Wo* againſt ſuch, *Jer.* 23. 1, 2. *Exek.* 34. 2, 3, 4.

And Chriſt compared ſuch to *Ravening Wolves in Sheeps Clothing*, and bids us *Beware of them, for by their Fruits* (ſaith he) *ye ſhall know them*, Mat. 7. 15, 16. *For they love to go in long Clothing, and love Salutations in the Market-places, and chief Seats in the Synagogues, and the uppermoſt Rooms at Feaſts, and to be called of Men* Rabbi, *or Maſter*, Mat. 23. 6, 7. Mark 12. 38, 39. Luke 20. 46. *Theſe are Murmurers, Complainers, walking after their own Luſts, and their Mouth ſpeaking great ſwelling Words; having Men's Perſons in admiration, becauſe of advantage*, Jude 16. who by their *Natural Knowledge* are become *brutiſh*, Jer. 51. 17. Jude 10. for it *puffeth up*, 1 Cor. 8. 1. and *the natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *They are of the World, therefore ſpeak they of the World, and the World heareth them*, 1 John. 4. 5. *And the Traditions and Commandments of Men they teach for Doctrine*, and ſeem to *draw near God with their Mouths, and honour him with their Lips, but their Hearts are far away*, Mat. 15. 8, 9. *Teaching things which they ought not for filthy Lucre ſake*, Tit. 1. 11. *And through Covetouſneſs ſhall they with feigned Words, make Merchandize of ſome, promiſſing them liberty, while they themſelves are the Ser-*

vants of Corruption, 2 Pet. 2. 3, 19. Such *consent not to wholesome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine, which is according to Godliness, but doting about Questions, and Strifes of Words, whereof comes Envy, Strife, Railings*, &c. 1 Tim. 6. 3, 4, 5. *From such withdraw thy self.*

Now I have briefly inserted some of the *general* Marks mentioned in Holy Scripture, describing both the *true* and *false Prophets, Ministers*, &c. and in the last description it doth seem to appear, that the **Physiognomy** of the *National Ministers* is *most discerned*, and therefore have we just cause to believe they are no true *Gospel-Ministers.*

But if any should suppose that this way of a general Proof or Trial is insufficient to render them no *Gospel-Ministers*, I shall also insert a few particulars, wherein they, and the *true Ministers of Christ*, are opposite, in *Call, Life* and *Practice.*

First, Christ sends forth, and gives *Commission* to his *Ministers*; and they *approved* themselves as his *Ministers, in much Patience, in Affliction, in Necessity, in Distress*, &c. 2 Cor. 6. 4. But these *National Ministers* are sent forth by Man, and their *Commission* they receive from Man, and by Man's Power they are upheld.

Secondly,

Secondly, Christ's *Ministers* preached *not with enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, but in Demonstration of the Spirit and Power, as they were taught by the Holy Ghost, and as that gave them utterance*, 1 Cor. 2. 4, 13. Acts 2. 4. Luke 12. 12. although several were mean Mechanicks.

But the *National Ministers* are fitted to their *Ministry* by the Wisdom and Study of Man, being partly educated at *Oxford* or *Cambridge*, their Learning and Studying of *Natural Languages*, *Arts*, *Sciences*, and *Philosophy*, and old *Heathen Authors*, the *Inventions* and *Traditions of Men*; who, by their Natural Industry and Parts, attain to their several Degrees, until they are thought of Ability to set up for themselves.

Thirdly, Christ sent forth his *Ministers* as *Sheep among Wolves*, and bid them *be as Wise as Serpents, and as Harmless as Doves*, Mat. 10. 16.

But some of the *National Ministers* rather appear to be in the Nature of *Wolves* themselves, *in Sheeps Clothing*; for their Works have *too evidently* manifested the same, by making *Havock* and *Spoil* of the *Goods* of their innocent and harmless Neighbours, and *violently* taking the same from them; and not only so, but sometimes casting their Bodies into Prison, and there have caused them to remain until

the

the Expiration of their Days, becauſe they could not for Conſcience ſake put into the Mouths of theſe that are greedy of *filthy Lucre*, or ſuch that ſeek *their Gain from their quarter.*

Fourthly, Chriſt commands his *Miniſters* to go from one Place, City, or Nation, to another, to Inſtruct or Teach the People, and promiſed *to be always with them to the Worlds End.*

But the *Prieſts* and *Biſhops* are limited within their particular *Diceſſes* and *Pariſhes*, great part of their Days; except ſometimes when a *large Benefice* is vacant, then ſome that have reſided in a *ſmaller Benefice* will ſtrive hard to get into it: So when they do *Remove* from one place to another, it is to get *more Money* by the *bargain*; and unto ſuch Calls as theſe, (viz. *Come up higher*) their Ears are very attentive; but to forſake a *large Benefice*, and voluntarily take a *ſmall One*, I never yet heard of one that did it.

Fifthly, Chriſt's Miniſters *freely received their Miniſtry* from Him, *and freely they gave* again. But this is not the caſe of the *Prieſts* in our Days; for they (or their Parents) ſometimes are at *great Charge* and *Expence* in fitting them out to their *Trade* or *Miniſtry*, and maintaining them at the *Univerſity* ſeveral Years; ſo that they cannot truly ſay, they have *freely* received

ceived their *Miniſtry*, neither do they *freely* give the ſame; but the People muſt *buy it*, ſuch as will have it (and ſuch as *will not* are forced to pay) at a dear Rate, conſidering how little it is worth: For from Seven Years to Seventy, they remain confeſſing themſelves to be Miſerable Offenders, and that there is no *Health* in them; and this is an evident Token that the Lord never ſent them, becauſe they *turn not the People from their evil ways*, Jer. 23. 22.

Sixthly, Chriſt's Miniſters were not to be as Lords over the Heritage of God, nor each other; Chriſt himſelf forbid it, and ſaid, *It ſhall not be ſo among you*, Mat. 20. 26. 1 Pet. 5. 3.

But them of the *National Miniſtry* exerciſe Lordſhip over their Flocks, and each other; ſome being called *Lords Spiritual*, and receive or embrace the Title of *Right Reverend Father in God—— Lord Biſhop of——*. Which is contrary to the Miniſters of Chriſt.

If I ſhould recite all particulars that might be mentioned, wherein there is a diſagreement, or contrariety, between the true *Miniſters of Chriſt* in the Primitive Times, and the *National Miniſters* in our Days, it would much enlarge what I intend; therefore theſe particulars in this place may ſuffice, to ſhew the difference between them. So to conclude this part, I ſhall leave theſe four things for them to prove by Scripture, if they can.

1ſt,

1*ſt.* To make Proof that they are *Chriſt's Miniſters*, by taking his *Miniſters* for their Examples, or comparing their Lives and Practices with thoſe that were truly ſo in the Primitive Times, *Phil.* 3. 17. 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 7. 2 *Tim.* 4. 5.

2*dly.* That his *Miniſters* have any Power or Authority from him to take, where it is not freely given.

3*dly.* That his *Miniſters* may, or did contend, ſtrive for, or compel any to give them of the things of this World, although they did partake of their *Miniſtry*; for *a Servant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle to all Men*, 2 Tim. 2. 24.

4*thly.* And laſtly, That his *Miniſters* may or did ever force *Tithes* or Maintenance by Law, from any that did not receive them, and their *Doctrine* or *Miniſtry*.

Now if they can make *full Proof* of theſe four things by plain Scripture, the Controverſie about *Tithes* would ſoon be ended; for I believe there would be an *Univerſal Conſent* thereunto: But in the *Interim* I ſhall turn to my third or laſt Head or Chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the *Eſtabliſhment* of **Tithes** after the *Apoſtacy* entered, with the Teſtimonies of ſeveral Ancient *Chriſtians* againſt the ſame:

Being chiefly Collected out of J. Fox's Acts and Monuments, *vol.* 1. *old Impreſſion*; *a Book, which, I ſuppoſe, moſt* Proteſtants *have a good Eſteem of.*

Firſt, I Do not find that the *Primitive Chriſtians* paid or received *Tithes* throughout all the Ten Perſecutions, or about Three Hundred Years after Chriſt; but then the *Church* was *maintain'd* by the free Benevolence of the People; as witneſſeth *Origen*, *Tertullian* and *Cyprian*; and alſo for the next Three Hundred Years, when *Heatheniſm* bore Sway in this Nation, which was till about the Year 600. about which time *Auguſtine* the *Monk* was ſent hither by *Gregory* (called) the *Great*, over from *Rome*, aſſiſted with ſeveral Preachers, to Convert the *Saxons* from *Paganiſm* to *Popery*; *Ethelbert* being then King of *Kent*, who was converted, and afterwards his Subjects: This *Ethelbert* is ſaid to be very bountiful to *Auguſtine*, and gave him the Lordſhip of his Chief

Chief City of *Canterbury*; yet I do not find by Hiſtory, that he gave him *Tithes*, or commanded *Tithes* to be given him.

But about the Year of our Lord, 786. as it is reported, a *Council* being held in *Mercia* by two *Legates*, ſent from Pope *Hadrian* the Firſt, wherein *Tithes* were *Eſtabliſhed*; ſo it ſeems the firſt *Law* for payment of *Tithes* came from the Pope, and was agreed and conſented unto by *Offa*, being at that time King of *Mercia*, (which was then about a ſeventh part of *England*) who by Counſel of his Queen, cauſed *Ethelbert*, firſt King of the *Eaſt-angles*, to be Slain upon falſe ſuſpition; and at length this *Offa*, underſtanding the Innocency of *Ethelbert*, and the Heinouſneſs of the Fact, gave the *Tenth part* of his Goods to *Holy Church*, in the remembrance of this *Ethelbert*; and built a *Monaſtery* beſides, endowing it with Lands and Rich Revenues, for Maintenance of a Hundred *Monks*; thinking thereby to expiate or leſſen his Sins, and merit Salvation; ſo afterwards went to *Rome* for his Pennance, where he gave the Church of St. *Peter* a Penny for every Houſe throughout his Dominion, *Acts* and *Mon.* vol. 1. p. 117.

And *Ethelwolf*, Son of *Egbert*, liking a Monkiſh Life, gave the Church the *Tithe* of all his Goods and Lands, p. 122.

And

And also 'tis said, That *Athelston* about *Anno* 924. caused his younger Brother, *Edwin*, to be set in an old rotten Boat, in the broad Sea, were he being *dismaied* with the rage of the Wind, cast himself over-board, and was drowned; which done, *Athelston* the King, coming to remembrance of himself, was stricken with great Repentance, and underwent Pennance the space of seven Years together, and also built two *Monasteries*, and *decreed* that *Tithes* should be paid, hoping thereby to expiate his Sins; the Form of which *Decree* or *Law* was this,

I Athelston, *King, charge and command all my Officers throughout my whole Realm, to give* Tithes *unto God of my proper Goods, as well in living Cattle, as in the Corn and Fruits of the Ground; and that my Bishops likewise of their proper Goods, and mine Aldermen, and my Officers and head Men, shall do the same*; and he wills them to declare it to such as be under their Subjection, *&c. Act.* and *Mon.* p. 137.

Edgar also about 959. is said to have continued the payment of *Tithes*, who being a Man of a vitious Life, displaced married *Priests*, and brought in *Monks* of a single Life to possess their Places: He was a Deflowrer of Virgins, and other lascivious Acts; he also built and repaired divers *Monasteries* and *Nunneries*.

Then

Then *Canutus* the first *Danish* King, who being Guilty of, or had consented unto, the Blood of *Edmund* and *Edward*, Sons of *Edmund Ironside*, who were Heirs to the Crown; for which cause it is said, about 1016. he confirmed *Tithes*, and in great Devotion built and endowed the *Monastery* of St. *Edmond* (now called St. *Edmund's-bury*, in *Suffolk*) for the seeming Ghost of this St. *Edmund* often affrighted him.

So about this time (which was a time of great Darkness and Ignorance) several such like *Examples* might be produced, whereby the Nation came to swarm with several *Religious Orders* (so called) and *Monasteries*, *Nunneries* and *Abbies*, were Erected and Endowed with large *Revenues* and *Tithes* for their Maintenance, that the Donors or Givers thereof, might have their Sins remitted, through the Prayers and Intercession of such that receiv'd them,

Now in this short Relation, there are three things worth Observation, *viz.*

1*st*, It was near 800. Years after Christ, before the first *Law* for payment of *Tithes* seems to be made in *England*.

2*dly*, *Tithes* were first given to the Church by the Pope's Authority, and confirmed by Popish Kings and Princes, that had been Guilty of, or had consented unto, *Murder* or *Bloodshed*;

ſhed, or ſome other *Henious Offence*, for the moſt part.

3*dly*, *Tithes* were not given firſt to Chriſt's *Miniſters* to Preach the Goſpel, but to the Popiſh *Clergy*, as *Prieſts*, *Monks*, &c. to maintain them in their *Idle Superſtitious Practices*; in ſaying and ſinging of *Maſſes*, and praying for the Souls of their Benefactors, that thereby (as is ſaid) they might have their Sins remitted, and merit Salvation.

So it is evident, that this way of *maintenance* of *Miniſters* by *Tythes*, aroſe from the Pope, and was impoſed by his Authority, without any ground for it in the *New Teſtament*, nor yet practiſed in the Apoſtles days, nor thoſe that ſucceeded them for ſome Hundred Years afterwards, until the Doctrine and Orders of the Apoſtles were neglected, and *Errors*, *Hereſies*, *Idolatrous* and *Superſtious Practices* came to take place.

But yet for a Thouſand Years after Chriſt, or more, it is obſervable that the Poor and Needy had a ſhare and part in the *Tithes* that was then given, for their Maintenance, which had ſome reſemblance to *Moſes*'s Law; but about this time the *Clergy* began to be ſo far degenerated from *Primitive Chriſtianity*, that much *Pride*, *Idleneſs*, *Superſtition*, *Covetouſneſs*, *Schiſms*, *Luxury*, and other *Evils*, were crept into their Church, which might be the cauſe that ſeveral of the Hearts of the People were

withdrawn from such freedom in *Administring* their *Tithes* to the *Clergy*, but gave more to the *Poor*, thinking it better bestowed without doubt; which the *Clergy* presently perceiving, began to make *Laws* and *Decrees*, to compel the People to pay all to them, that they might fill their own Pockets; whereby the Poor came to be left destitute, and still are, of that which was at first given as their Right.

One of the Synodal Injunctions of *Anselmus*, Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, 1106. was, *That no Tithes should be given, but to the Church.* Act. and Mon. p. 176.

And about 1180. a *Council* being held under Pope *Alexander* the Third, observing the *Poor* to have much given them, made a *Decree* to restrain Peoples Freedoms in that case.

And about 1215. at the *Council* of *Lateran*, under Pope *Innocent* the Third, it was decreed, *That Tithes should be paid to the Parochial Priests.*

And also about 1270. at a *Council* at *Lyons*, under Pope *Gregory* the Tenth, it was constituted, *That it should not henceforth be lawful for Men to give their Tithes as they pleased, as they had done, but pay all to the Mother Church.*

Thus you see how the Covetous *Clergy* have, by *Popish Laws*, got all to themselves (and robbed the Poor of their Right.) Nevertheless, in this time of Gross Darkness, and Midnight of Popery, the Lord raised

up

up ſome to ſtand as *Faithful Witneſſes* for him, againſt this *Anti-chriſtian Yoke* of **Tithes**, and forced Maintenance, as well as other Superſtitious things: But for Brevity ſake, I ſhall only mention a few Teſtimonies to this purpoſe.

Arnulphus, Arch-Biſhop of *Lugdun*, who lived in the time of Pope *Honorius* the Second, 1127. to the *Clergy* he ſaid, 'I Preach to you 'the Truth, and blame your Pride, Stout-'neſs, Avarice, Incontinency, with your un-'meaſurable Greedineſs of getting and heap-'ing up Riches. With much more that they could not bear; therefore 'tis ſaid, 'They 'privily took him, and drowned him, *Teſtimony of the True Church of God*, p. 97.

Gulielmus de St. Amore, a chief Ruler of the *Univerſity* of *Paris*, about the Year 1260. in his 11th *Sign* of true and falſe Prophets, ſaith, 'That true Apoſtles do Preach only for God's 'Cauſe, and for the Health of Souls, and 'for no Temporal Gain, but only to the 'Glory of Chriſt. Falſe Prophets do Preach 'upon ſome occaſion, as either ſeeking ſome 'Commodity at the Hands of Men, or elſe 'becauſe of getting Goods, Honour, and 'Praiſe among Men. Therefore theſe evil 'and naughty Preachers, which Preach for 'worldly Gain or Honour, or elſe for the 'Praiſe and Commendation of Men, be no 'true Apoſtles, but falſe Prophets. And in his

18th *Sign*, ſaith, 'That true Apoſtles do not 'deſire the Riches and Goods of them to 'whom they Preach (much leſs of thoſe to whom they Preach not) 'whereby they 'are diſcerned from Wolves, *viz.* from falſe Prophets; and brings *Paul*'s words, *Acts* 20. *I have deſired no Man's Gold nor Silver, but his hands miniſtred to his neceſſities:* 'This Example 'of Labouring *(ſaith he)* is a Spectacle for 'Biſhops, *Acts* and *Mon.* p. 290.

John Wickliff's 17th Article for which he was Cenſured, was, 'That Tenths (or *Tithes*) 'are pure Alms, and that the Pariſhones may, 'for the offence of their Curates, detain and 'keep them back, and beſtow them upon 'others, at their own Wills and Pleaſures. Upon which *Article* is a large Diſputation, in which is ſhewed what *Alms* is *(viz.)* '*Alms* is a Work whereby any thing is given 'to the Needy of Compaſſion for God's 'ſake, *&c.* And alſo ſhews, 'That *Tithes* 'were the Tributes of poor Souls, and that 'the *Clergy* were not Lords thereof, but only '*Stewards*; and if they abuſe the ſame, they 'are Thieves, Robbers, and Sacrilegious Perſons. And in the Prayer and Complaint of the *Plowman*, which is thought to be the ſaid *John Wickliff*'s, 'tis ſaid, 'But Lord there 'cometh hired Men, and they ne feeden not 'thy Sheep in thy plenteous Leſew, but feeden thy Sheep with Dreams, and falſe Miracles,

'racles, and Tales, but at thy Truth they ne 'come not; for Lord I trow thou ſendeſt 'them never: Lord, of theſe hired Men, 'ſpeaketh *Jeremy* the Prophet, and thou 'ſayeſt that Word by him, I ne ſent them 'not, and they run quickly; I ne ſpake 'unto them, and they propheciden. *John Hus* maintained *J. Wickliff*'s Opinions, and ſealed the ſame with his Blood, at *Prague* in *Bohemia*.

William Swinderby, one of his *Articles* was, 'That *Tithes* purely be *Alms*; and that any 'Perſon that doth give his *Alms* to any, 'which in his Judgment is not in neceſſity, 'doth Sin in ſo giving it. And in his *Appeal* to the King, ſaith, 'Chriſt's Law bids to mi-'niſter Spiritual Things freely to the People; 'the Pope with his Law ſells for Money, as 'Pardons, Orders, Bleſſings, Sacraments, Pray-'ers, Benefices, and *Preaching* to the People, *Anno* 1389.

Walter Brute, which is ſaid to be a Man having the mighty Operation of *God's Spirit* in him, his 4th *Article* was, 'That no Man 'is bound to give *Tithes* or *Oblations*; and if 'any Man will needs give, he may give his '*Tithes* and *Oblations* to whom he will, ex-'cluding thereby the Curates.—In his *Vin-dication*, ſaith, 'It is plain that the *Tithes* were 'given to the Sons of *Levi*, for their ſerving 'in the Tabernacle, and in the Temple of the

'Lord, as the firſt Fruits were given to the 'Prieſts, and alſo their Sacrifices; and ſo 'were the Vows of their *Miniſtry*, as it ap-'pears in the Book of *Numbers*, Chap. 22. 'But, for as much as the Labour of thoſe 'Sacrifices did ceaſe at the coming (or Suffer-'ing) of Chriſt, how ſhould thoſe things be 'demanded, which were ordained for that 'Labour? And ſeeing that the firſt Fruits 'were not demanded of Chriſtians; which 'firſt Fruits were then rather and ſooner de-'manded than the *Tithes:* Why muſt the '*Tithes* be demanded, except it be, therefore 'peradventure, becauſe that the *Tithes* be 'more worth in value than the firſt Fruits? And farther, 'Wherefore ſeeing that neither 'Chriſt, nor any of the Apoſtles command-'ed to pay *Tithes*, it is manifeſt and plain, 'neither by the Law of *Moſes*, nor by *Chriſt*'s 'Law, Chriſtian People are bound to pay '*Tithes*; but by the Traditions of Men 'they are bound. With much more upon this Subject.

William Thorp, in his Examination before the Arch-Biſhop of *Canterbury*, 1407. ſaith, 'That the Arch-Biſhop charged him with 'Preaching openly and boldly at *Shrewsbury*, 'that Prieſts have no Title to *Tithes*. Part of his anſwer was, 'That in the old law (which 'ended not fully till the time that Chriſt roſe 'up again from Death to Life) God com-

'manded

'manded *Tithes* to be given to the *Levites*, for 'their great Buſineſs and daily Travel that 'pertained to their Office; but Prieſts, be-'cauſe their Travel was much more eaſie and 'light than was the Office of the *Levites*, God 'ordained that the Prieſts ſhould take the '10th part of thoſe *Tithes* for their liveli-'hood; but now (I ſaid) in the new Law, 'neither Chriſt nor any of his Apoſtles took '*Tithes* of the People, nor commanded the 'People to pay *Tithes*, neither to Prieſts nor 'to Deacons: — He ſpeaketh, that *Gregory* 'the 10th commanded new *Tithes* to be paid 'unto Prieſts: — And alſo Chriſt taught the 'People to do Alms, that is, works of Mer-'cy to poor needy Men (of Surplus (that is) Superfluous of their Temporal Goods) 'which they had more than needs to their 'neceſſary livelihood; and thus, I ſaid, not 'of *Tithes*, but of pure Alms of the People, 'Chriſt lived and his Apoſtles, when they 'were ſo buſie in Preaching the Word of 'God to the People, that they might not 'travel otherwiſe to get their livelihood; 'but after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, when the Apo-'ſtles had received the Holy Ghoſt, they 'travelled with their hands to get their live-'lihood, *&c.*

The Arch-Biſhop *ſaid*, 'Thinkeſt thou this 'wholeſome Learning to ſow openly, or yet 'privately, among the People? Certain this

' Doctrine contrarieth plainly the Ordinance ' of holy Fathers, which have ordained, grant- ' ed and licenſed Prieſts to be in divers degrees, ' and to live by *Tithes* and *Offerings* of the ' People.

William Thorp, ' If Prieſts live vertuouſly, ' by the Example of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, ' without *Tithes*, &c. the People would give ' them freely ſufficient livelihood.

A Clark ſaid, ' How wilt thou make this ' good, that the People will give freely to the ' Prieſt their livelihood, ſince that now by Law ' every Prieſt can ſcarcely conſtrain the People ' to give them their livelihood?

William Thorp, ' Sir, it is now no wonder ' though the People grudge to give Prieſts the ' livelihood they ask; much People know ' how that Prieſts ſhould live, and how that ' they live contrary to Chriſt and his Apo- ' ſtles; the poor needy People are forſaken, ' and left of the Prieſts to be ſuſtained of ' the Pariſhoners, as if the Prieſts took no- ' thing of the Pariſhoners for to help the ' People withal; ſo the Pariſhoners pay ' their Temporal Goods twice, where once ' might ſuffice, if Prieſts were true Diſpenſa- ' tors, *&c.*

Now if theſe faithful *Witneſſes* and *Martyrs* of Jeſus have obtained ſuch a good Report for their Conſtancy, as they have amongſt *Proteſtants*, Why ſhould not their Teſtimonies be

be thought worthy to be regarded? For doubtleſs, in what they have here declared, concerning *Tithes*, they had the *holy Scripture* on their ſide; and not only ſo, but the *Spirit* of the Lord in meaſure did aſſiſt and encourage them, to *Declare* and *Teſtifie* againſt thoſe things which at this day are upheld and vindicated, and that by Thoſe that ſeem to have an *honourable Eſteem* of theſe *firſt Reformers*, though in Life and Practice *conform* not therewith, but are found in the ſame ſteps of thoſe they *teſtified againſt*.

But to this purpoſe, I will further add part of the 15th Article of the *Bohemians*, againſt the *Uſurping Power* of the *Clergy* in their day—*(viz.)* 'That they receive *Tithes* of Men, and 'will of right have them, and preach and 'ſay, That Men are bound to give them 'Tithes; and therein they ſay falſly, for they 'cannot prove by the *New Teſtament*, that 'our Lord Jeſus Chriſt commanded it, nor 'his Diſciples warned no Man to do ſo, 'neither did themſelves receive them: But, 'although in the *Old Teſtament* it were commanded to give *Tithes*, yet it cannot thereby be proved, that Chriſtian Men are bound 'thereto; for this Precept of the *Old Teſtament* had an end in the firſt Year of *(or after)* our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, like as the 'Precept of *Circumciſion*. Wherefore, well-beloved, conſider and ſee how your *Biſhops* 'ſeduce

'ſeduce you, and ſhut your Eyes, with 'things that have no proof: *Chriſt* ſaith, in 'the 11th of *Luke*, *Give Alms of thoſe things 'that remain*; but he ſaid not, Give the Tenth 'of the Goods which ye poſſeſs; but, *Give 'Alms*, &c. *Anno* 1403.

Now, by ſome of theſe foregoing Teſtimonies, it ſeems, that *Tithes* were at firſt given alſo among ſome *Chriſtians*, upon no other account, or ground, than they did give *Alms*; being left to every Man's freedom, which ('tis ſaid) was *divided by the Biſhop*, part to the *Prieſt*, and part to the *Poor*; but through Cuſtom and Uſage, and the *Clergy*'s Covetouſneſs, they at laſt became enforceable by their *Laws* and *Decrees*, and to be paid to another Uſe, than for which they were at firſt given; and ſo have continued until this Age, through ſeveral *Changes* of *Government*: For *Generally* theſe cunning **Tithe-mongers** can ſet their *Sail* to the Wind, let it ſit how it will, ſo that by it they may have their *own* Corn ground, or bring *large Profit* to themſelves; for if we look a little back, until the Reign of *Hen.* 8. King of *England*, we ſhall find a great *Difference* and *Contention* between Him and the *Pope*, inſomuch that at laſt he denied the *Pope*'s *Supremacy* and *Authority*; and it was *aboliſhed* in *England* by *Parliament*, and an *Act* made, which gave the King all *Religious Houſes*,

Houſes, with all their Lands and Goods; and the *Clergy* took an Oath, that they would *Renounce the Pope's Authority*, and Swore to be true to the *King*, his *Heirs* and *Succeſſors*; they alſo acknowledged their holding their *Biſhoprick* of the *King* Only, Petitioning him to make Reſtitution of the *Temporalities* of the ſaid *Biſhopricks*; ſo they then acknowledged the King to be *Supreme Head of the Church*, as they had done the *Pope* before; ſo this *King*, with his *Parliament*, made two *Acts* for the Recovery of *Tithes*.

After him Reigned his Son *Edward* the 6th; in whoſe Reign, *Injunctions* were ſet forth, for the pulling down, and removing of *Images* out of their *Churches*; and alſo the Book of *Common-Prayer* was eſtabliſhed; and another *Act*, made for the Payment of * *Predial Tithes*.

* Such things as grow from the Ground, as *Corn*, *Hay*, &c.

After him, his Siſter, Queen *Mary* came to the *Crown*, ſhe put down *Common-Prayer*, and ſet up *Popery* and *Maſs* again; and the *Clergy* then Swore to be True to their *Holy Mother*, *the Church of* Rome; *and their Holy Father*, *the* Pope; there being about Three Hundred that ſuffered Death for *Religion* in her time; among which number, was of the *Clergy* about Twenty Six.

Queen *Mary* dying, her Siſter *Elizabeth* came to the *Crown*; ſhe put down *Maſs* again, and

and ſet up *Common-Prayer*; and ſhe was acknowledged to be the *Supreme Head of the Church*; and as many of the *Clergy* as refuſed to take the Oath to her, were turned out of their *Benefices*; which was but about One Hundred and Twenty *that refuſed*, in about Nine Thouſand (being not One in Seventy) ſo by their Conformity, they ſtill retained their *Benefices* and *Tithes*, throughout the Reign of King *James* the Firſt, and *Charles* the Firſt, till the Year 1644. which was in the time of the *Long Parliament*; and then *Common-Prayer* was denied, and voted down, and the *Directory* (ſo called) for publick Worſhip was ſet up, by a *Synod* of *Prieſts* then ſitting at *Weſtminſter*; the generality of the *Clergy*, rather than loſe their *Benefices*, did conform with this alſo; but then they having denied and renounced their *Ordination by Biſhops*, were not ſuch *Eccleſiaſtical Perſons* that by former Laws had power to demand *Tithes*: Alſo about this time, there were many *Petitions* to the *Parliament* againſt them and much Writing for their *Aboliſhment*; ſo theſe *Prieſts* (being quick-ſighted in ſuch matters) preſently ſaw danger, and made their *Petitions* to the *Parliament* for Them, and prevail'd, againſt the many *Petitions* that were to the contrary; and then they ſued the People called *Quakers* for Non-payment in *Oliver*'s Name, at their *Courts*, *Aſſizes* and *Seſſions*, putting

ting many in Priſon till Death, and making Spoil of their Goods.

And when King *Charles* the Second came to the *Crown*, and the *Common-Prayer Book* was ſet up again; it is yet well known to many now alive, how that many of theſe *greedy Prieſts* did embrace it again for Lucre ſake, as *Divine Service*; although before they did reject it as *Idolatrous:* And ſince which time, they have gotten other *Laws* made, to *Recover the Oil that feeds the Light of their Goſpel*, (as one of them term'd *Tithes**) which *Laws* have by ſome of them been *Executed unto great Severity*, on many of thoſe that for *Conſcience ſake* cannot put into their Mouths.

*In a Paper entitled, *The Dreadful Danger of Sacrilege.*

Thus it may be ſeen, what a great *Eſteem* theſe Men have of their high applauded *Diana* of *Tithes*, that generally they have conformed to any *Power* that hath been uppermoſt, rather than loſe their Profit and Gain gotten by their *Craft*, which is as a *principal Pillar* to ſupport and uphold their *Miniſtry*; and the Foundation of this *Pillar* ſeems to ſtand on a bad Ground, not warrantable by *Scripture*, and many Thouſands are (and have been) *born up by it*; and if they perceive it to *totter* or *ſhake*, then, for fear it ſhould fall, *ſpeedily* they call out for help of thoſe they would ſeem to be above, which hitherto hath been

been granted them; but if their help and ſupport ſhould come to be *withdrawn*, then down it would fall, and without queſtion, many that is *born up by it*, would *tumble down with it*; for their Lives and Practices have but little *influence* upon the Hearts of the People, by which they ſhould be engaged freely to *Adminiſter* unto them, as *Goſpel-Miniſters*.

Now conſidering what I have here laid down concerning *Tithes*, I ſhall alſo annex ſeveral *Reaſons* why *I am perſwaded* the People called *Quakers* refuſe to pay the ſame unto the *Pariſh Prieſts*; endeavouring thereby to remove the Opinion of ſome, that ſay, It is only a pretended *Scruple of Conſcience*, or nothing of *Conſcience* in it.

Reaſon 1. Becauſe **Tithes**, as they are now paid, appear to be inconſiſtent with all the *Examples* that can be produced from the *Old* or *New Teſtament*.

Reaſon 2. Becauſe **Tithes**, as they were paid by the *Jews* unto the *Levites*, was put an end unto by *Chriſt*, when he offered up himſelf an acceptable *Sacrifice*, once for all; thereby *aboliſhing that Prieſthood*, and the *Rites* and *Ceremonies* thereof: And to uphold and maintain the ſame ſtill, is *Jewiſh*, and to deny *Chriſt* come in the Fleſh; therefore of *Anti-chriſt*, 1 John 4. 3.

Reaſon

Reaſon 3. Becauſe **Tithes**, ſince Chriſt, hath been brought in, and ſet up in the Church, by the *Pope*'s *Authority*, and commanded to be paid by *Popiſh Kings*, *Princes*, *Councils*, &c. to uphold and maintain the *Clergy*, in that which *Proteſtants* count Superſtition.

Reaſon 4. Becauſe to pay **Tithes**, is to undervalue, and do contrary to, or cenſure, the Generation of the Faithful, who have born Teſtimony againſt it, and ſuffered under *Popery* and *Prelacy* that upheld it.

Reaſon 5. Becauſe by paying **Tithes**, is to uphold and maintain ſuch a *Miniſtry*, that (with good Reaſon) we believe is inconſiſtent with the *Miniſtry of Chriſt*.

Reaſon 6. Becauſe that in ſo doing, we ſhall be found *Hypocrites*, in putting our hands to help to uphold that thing, which we believe the Lord hath determined to caſt down, and utterly aboliſh.

Reaſon 7. Becauſe it is ſaid, *Let every Man be fully perſwaded in his own mind*; and, *Whatſoever is not of Faith, is Sin*, Rom. 14. 5, 23. And we are perſwaded, for the *Reaſons* aforeſaid, that we ought not to pay **Tithes**; and alſo believe, that the *National Miniſters* have no *juſt Right* to it; therefore to us it would be a *Sin* to pay it them.

Reaſon

Reason 8. Because we believe, there is no *Law* that is, or can be made by Men, of greater *Power* or *Authority* than the *Law* of *God*, that is *truly written in the Heart and Conscience*, agreeable to the *Holy Scriptures*; therefore we say, *Whether ought we not to obey God rather than Men*, **Judge ye?** Acts 4. 18. and 5. 29.

FINIS.